2. Very dense forest and open forest in the 28 Tiger Reserves have shown an increase of 33 km^2 and 124 km^2 respectively, while moderately dense forest has decreased by 251 km^2.

3. Major loss in forest cover has occurred in Nameri, Buxa, Manas, Indravati and Dampa Tiger Reserves mainly due to socio-economic reasons and natural disasters.

4. Forest cover in the Outer Surround (10 km. radial distance from periphery) has increased in case of two Tiger Reserves, decreased in case of 21 Tiger Reserves and is unchanged in case of five Tiger Reserves.

5. The total forest cover in the Outer Surround of the 28 Tiger Reserves has decreased by 124 km^2.

Shifting of big cats

1848. SHRI M.V. MYSURA REDDY: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Sariska tiger reserve is not fit for tiger as per ecological analysis of the reserve; and

(b) if so, the measures taken to shift the big cats, if any, to a better habitat of tigers?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI NAMO NARAIN MEENA): (a) and (b)As advised by this Ministry, the State (Rajasthan), has submitted a recovery plan for Sariska Tiger Reserve, which includes reintroduction of tiger. The Wildlife Institute of India has recommended reintroduction of five tigers (three females and two males), subject to fulfillment of conditions for habitat recovery.

Clearance to Irrigation Projects

1849. SHRI S.M. LALJAN BASHA: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government have given environmental and forest clearance to every major and medium irrigation project in the last two years;

(b) if so, whether it is a fact that such clearances are being given on the approvals of DIG Forest level officers;

(c) to what extent Government have eroded and diluted the system and procedures invalued in giving environmental and forest clearances;

(d) whether Government proposes to scrap the total system; and

(e) the schedule of such scrapping of the requirements for clearances?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI NAMO NARAIN MEENA): (a) No, Sir. During the last two years (01.08.2004 to 31.07.2006) 65 irrigation projects involving diversion of forest land have been granted approval under Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980, while 6 irrigation projects have been rejected on merit and 14 proposals have been closed/returned for want of requisite information. In case of environmental clearance, only new major irrigation projects require environmental clearance under EIA Notification of 1994.Medium irrigation projects do not require environmental clearance. During the last two years, 26 irrigation proposals have been granted environmental clearance.

(b) No, Sir. The proposals requiring diversion of forest land under Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980 are examined by the Forest Advisory Committee constituted under Section-3 of the Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980. Similarly, the proposals requiring environmental clearance are also examined by Expert Committees. On the recommendations of these Committees, the forestry clearance or the environmental clearance is granted by the Central Government.

(c) No erosion and dilution of the system and procedure involved in giving environmental and forestry clearance has taken place.

(d) No, Sir.

(e) Question does not arise.

National River Conservation Plan in Orissa

1850. SHRI SURENDRA LATH: MS. PRAMILA BOHIDAR:

Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) how many towns have been considered under National River Conservation Plan on river Mahanadi in Orissa;

(b) how much funds have been sanctioned for this plan in Orissa;